

and the sky was misty. The large flock was flying fast on a course of 205° (i.e. 25°W of S) in a stream, nearly a mile (=1.5 km) wide, and at a height of about 300 m above ground level (altitude 1150 m). The white under-wing coverts were clearly visible in flight. During this impressive passage the birds made absolutely no sound, nor did any of them deviate from their direct flight. The passage was still in progress when dusk fell, and counting had to stop. No local roosts of this bird were known to me in the Dodoma area.

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ELEONORA'S FALCON WINTERING IN SOUTHERN TANZANIA Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae* has for many years been thought to winter exclusively in Madagascar, travelling from its Mediterranean breeding grounds via the Red Sea, Suez and Somalia (Brown & Amadon 1968). I am therefore most grateful to John Savidge, formerly Senior Warden in Ruaha National Park, southern Tanzania, for the following information on Eleonora's Falcon in Ruaha from 1964 to 1969, which prompted my own visit to the Park in December 1970.

Savidge (*in litt.*) reported that Eleonora's Falcon arrived in Ruaha during early December immediately after the first heavy rainfall of the rainy season, and was then present in the Park throughout the rains until late March and early April. He found them more numerous and more concentrated early in the rainy season than later, and noted that they often occurred in considerable numbers, e.g. "over 80 in one straggling flock, and 300 in an afternoon, all flying over a given point". Savidge thought that numbers appeared to be directly related to the amount of rainfall and the availability of winged termites, which were normally prolific in Ruaha immediately after the onset of the rains and, as such, attracted large numbers of insect-eating birds - particularly migratory falcons. The Eleonora's Falcons were normally accompanied by small numbers of European Hobbies *F. subbuteo* and occasionally Eastern Red-footed Falcons *F. amurensis* and, as can be seen from Table 1, the arrival of the first Eleonora's coincided closely with the onset of the rainy season and the subsequent emergence of termites.

TABLE 1

Year	Rains started	First <i>F. eleonorae</i>
1964	19 December	20 December
1965	1 December	7 December
1966	6 December	20 December
1967	1 December	11 December
1968	5 December	8 December
1969	13 December	19 December

John Savidge, himself a keen and active falconer, having had a tame Eleonora's Falcon for some years earlier in Ugnada (purchased, incidentally, on the street in Kampala), was therefore understandably keen and interested in these, and other migratory falcons while he was in Ruaha.

My own visit to Ruaha National Park (4-8 December 1970) was intended to

coincide with both the onset of the rains and, hopefully, the influx of migratory falcons. The rains had already started, although the first large arrival was in the early morning of 6 December after a night of continuous heavy rain. A large mixed flock of European Hobbies, Eastern Red-footed Falcons and Lesser Kestrels *F. neumanni* was observed in the vicinity of the Park Headquarters, while nearby, along the Ruaha River, an adult Eleonora's Falcon fed on flying termites for most of that day. John Savidge was away at the time, and returned on 19 December (11 days after my visit) when he also noticed a single Eleonora's. However, he reported later, that due to the generally poor rains that season (1970-1971) he had noticed only a relatively small number of falcons in the Park.

Although the world population of Eleonora's Falcon is considered to be only about 4000 birds (Brown 1970), previously thought to winter exclusively in Madagascar, my own experience of them there is that they are greatly outnumbered by the Sooty Falcon *F. concolor*. The two species have frequently been confused. In general, however, Eleonora's is a rather uncommon winter visitor, mainly confined to the high central plateau with extreme dates of 20 November and 14 April.

Whereas it would appear that some Eleonora's arrive in Madagascar almost a month before the first arrivals in southern Tanzania (although Madagascar lies much further south than Tanzania), it may be that the Tanzania wintering birds originate from a different population from those which winter in Madagascar. Also, one might expect Tanzania wintering birds to occur on passage in Kenya, yet Backhurst, Britton & Mann (1973) comment that "the bulk of the population of this falcon must pass to the east of our area on their way to and from their known wintering grounds in Madagascar but a few may pass along the rift valley in Kenya and Tanzania". Two birds near Embu on 10 November 1974 (EANHS Ornithological Sub-Committee 1977) may well have been *en route* to southern Tanzania, and constitute only the second positive record of this species in Kenya.

The paucity of records from northern and eastern Africa is perhaps an indication that the greater part of the journey from the Mediterranean to winter quarters is made in a long, and almost non-stop flight. Certainly their late departure from Europe in October, with first arrivals in Madagascar in November, and in southern Tanzania in early December, lends weight to this theory.

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